Eco(il)logical Knowledge
On Different Ways of Relating with the Known

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Abstract   In this article, I narrate an ethnographic storyline that involves forest inhabitants, local politicians, development professionals, and scientific researchers in both representational and nonrepresentational worlds of knowing. I discuss how and why, in Angola, making forest knowledge through relations of distance to the forests is crucial for attaining institutional legitimacy over the forests. This way of acquiring authority and influence is championed by a broad epistemological tendency to address only the absent, which is then made present by accredited representers. Yet this technique disempowers local forest dwellers in their everyday territories and disallows the capacity that the ecological knowns have to reveal themselves. Knowing Angolan forests through absence and distance is not just a potent contemporary form of knowledge that qualifies as a way of ruling the forests, but is also integral to widespread (neo)colonial processes of distinction and separation: the knower and the known, the representer and the represented, the "cosmopolitan intellectual" and the "rustic bestial" Other. Finally, I discuss different forms of ecological knowledge in light of ethical stances toward knowing, relationality, and, ultimately, being.

Keywords   forests, nonrepresentational, partly representable knowledge, ecological knowledge, epistemologies, Angola, Africa

"We need reliable information on forests." This plea traveled the world in a brochure made by a major agency of the United Nations.[1] A few years later, in 2012, NASA revealed the most accurate map ever produced of the United States's forests. One leading researcher in the project explained the reasons for its production: "Forests are a key element for human activity. We have to know [them properly]."[2] By 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee published a final document on "EU forest strategy" that states, "improved knowledge base is the key to understanding [the forests]."[3]

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1. FAO brochure, "Seeing the forest . . . "
2. Josef Kellndorfer, quoted in Boyle, "Land of the tree."
3. European Economic and Social Committee, "Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee," 128.

Declarations of the vital relevance of knowledge about forests have proliferated among institutions on almost all continents. All arise in the midst of a larger concern: in order to maintain conditions conducive to life, we have to understand the biosphere and its components properly.

But how to do so?

In December 2014 I met with Mateus Côxi,[4] a middle-aged university professor and NGO consultant in forest management who works from the Angolan city of Huambo. During our two-hour conversation he used geospatial images, graphs, and satellite maps to support his knowledge of a forest located in Gove, about one hundred kilometers from Huambo. Mateus was in the process of finishing a commissioned report on forest land in that area. At one point, I asked him for photos from the forest. "I don't have [any]," he said, "because I was never there." He then continued: "The peasants living there cannot use the forest as theirs. Forests are a delicate matter." Alluding to the quality and usefulness of his work, Mateus concluded, "They have to be dealt with by experts who *know them properly*." He made it clear that he considered accurate forest knowledge to be possible when the knower is at some distance from the forest itself.

Farther south, as we strolled through a dry bushy area, I asked Gabriel Augusto, a 23-year-old resident in the village of Cusseque, about his knowledge of the forest we were in. He told me: "Feel the sound in the soles of your feet and you learn about this forest." Later, Felicia Zambica, another resident in the village, joined us. "The rain doesn't rain as it used to," she said. "The forest is transforming." Seeing my questioning facial expression, she grabbed what seemed to be a small, solid rock from the ground and told me to cup my hands and put them below hers. Then, while gently crumbling the "rock" and letting the brown dust fall into my hands, she asked, "Do you feel it?" I felt an inexpressible sensation through my fingers, as if my knowledge of the forest soil had increased in significance through "hereness" and tactility.

The statements and actions of Felicia, Gabriel, and Mateus inspire an important discussion about the nature of ecological knowledge. This is far from straightforward, and it has permeated much of the debate on "environmental truth" and governance.[5] Yet, in most academic, political, and development circles, there is an element that appears practically uncontested in these discussions: as Bruno Latour puts it, there is "no reality without representation."[6] At the core of his work, Latour deconstructs reality and its making through (scientific) knowledge activity by focusing on the material and social processes behind the fabrication of representations.[7] Latour, like many other scholars, posits that representations are not just passive signals helping us to communicate

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4. All names are pseudonyms.

5. For example, see Agrawal, *Environmentality*; Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*; Goldman and Turner, "Introduction"; and Fairhead and Leach, *Science, Society, and Power*.

6. Latour, *Politics of Nature*, 127.

7. Latour, "Drawing Things Together"; Latour and Woolgar, *Laboratory Life*.

about things. Rather, they are interventional "figures of knowledge" that produce realities and thus engender "the order of things."[8]

One of the most compelling arguments to explain the dominion of representations, specifically in forest knowledge, is that there is a need to create and use intermediaries to refer to actual phenomena "that [are] too large, distant or subtle to be physically brought into the room."[9] As Hanna Pitkin explains, the word *representation* derives from the Latin *repraesentare*, "to make present" what is not.[10] In this context, representations can be utilized for their potential to liberate humans from interacting directly with the matters at stake in order to know (or claim to know) them. To put it another way, by allowing knowledge to be produced, distributed, and claimed in the absence of the actual referents, representations can serve to support the physical alienation of the knower from the objects of his or her knowledge. Yet representations are relational. They connect the knower with the known in various ways and can bring the knower closer to the known regardless of the physical distance between them. At the heart of the matter, representing and representations are a form of relating.

In this article, my aim is to explore the relationalities of knowing, in particular (though not exclusively) in relation to the forests in Angola. Influenced by Emmanuel Levinas's hermeneutics of lived experience, I investigate the ethical reasoning underlying a largely implicit belief in the field of ecology: that in order to achieve legitimacy, knowledge has to represent. Coming in the wake of a tradition of poststructuralism, Michael Dillon posits that what we make of the world—how and what we know about the world—is the product of the way we relate with it.[11] Following this reasoning, and in agreement with Jarret Zigon's argument that ethics are to be conceived in terms of the character of relationships,[12] what could we say about the ethics of knowledge and the legitimacy of governance of forests gained and exercised mostly through relationships of physical distance from them? Gail Weiss reaffirms the relevance of this question when she argues, "It is in and through our bodies that we feel the effects of our moral judgements and practices."[13] Having this in mind, a final, guiding query emerges: what makes the promotion of representational knowledge and distance so decisive in ecology?

Based on ethnographic research on forms of ecological knowledge in Southeast Angola between 2011 and 2014, I demonstrate that representations of ecological knowns generated through relationships of sensorial disconnection with them do not gain currency and power because of their claims to accuracy as affirmed by many scientists, development professionals, politicians, and environmental activists worldwide. Rather, such representations are valued because they open up the possibility for linking with

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8. Foucault, *The Order of Things*.
9. Rajão, "Representations and Discourses," 21.
10. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 214.
11. Dillon, "Poststructuralism, Complexity, and Poetics," 4.
12. Zigon, "Attunement and Fidelity," 21.
13. Weiss, *Body Images*, 141.

the represented at a distance; and in doing so they allow authority to be claimed and exercised from afar. By rendering ecological terrains relatable and governable at a distance, representations support projects of authority despite, or even through, absence. In Southeast Angola, these projects downplay the knowledge generated through the auto-presentation of the known. Furthermore, they relegate what I call partly representable knowledge to a "lower" status, as inappropriate, if not dangerous.

Partly representable knowledge refers to knowledge that is *mainly* nonrepresentable and is necessarily based on physical proximity in which knowledge is coconstituted with and in the presence of the knowable.[14] It hinges on the knowables-in-themselves and takes the form of intercorporeality. Therefore, here I wish to propose partly representable knowledge (and even thinking) as a relational field of intersubjectivity between knowers and the known.[15]

Of course, since these pages themselves represent, they cannot fully convey the essence of such a knowledge. But, as Michael Carolan points out,[16] this does not mean that we cannot at least get a taste of it by talking and writing about its vestiges. Moreover, the prominent inhabitation and yet nonreferable character of the nonrepresentable in certain ways of knowing should not prevent us from considering its ethical possibilities in promoting more integrative forms of politics. As Catriona Sandilands observes, "if the part of nature that is beyond language is to exert an influence on politics, there must be a political recognition of the limits of language to represent nature, which to me means the development of an ethical relation to the Real."[17] Ultimately, the story that I tell here illuminates how the association of rationality, credibility, and ethics with representations in exclusive, total terms reproduces and reinforces discriminatory divisions: the knower and the known, Us and the Other, humans and nature, governors and governed.

This article proceeds in four main sections: First I introduce a sequence of episodes involving various people with regard to a forest located in Southeast Angola. This sequence epitomizes something broader that I became aware of during my fieldwork: forests are an epistemic field that evidences contrasting modes of relating with the known. In the second section, I explore the notion of forest knowledge as held by Angolan officials as being informed by criteria of representation and distance. In contrast with this, I then discuss alternative ways of knowing the forests, apprehended and

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14. In contrast with "nonrepresentational knowledge" (for example, see Anderson and Harrison, "The Promise of Non-representational Theories"; and Thrift, *Non-representational Theory*), the concept of partly representable knowledge incorporates the possibility of representational agency in the process of knowing.

15. Inspired by Johannes Fabian's "Ethnography and Intersubjectivity," I take intersubjectivity as a condition of communication (either with or without the use of representations) that is coproductive of knowledge and that precludes hierarchical relationships between those taking part in such coproduction (both humans and nonhumans).

16. Carolan, "More-than-Representational Knowledge/s of the Countryside," 412.

17. Sandilands, *The Good-Natured Feminist*, 180.

held through proximity, presence, and the partly representational. I concentrate on the village of Cusseque. Finally, in the last section I continue with contrasts and counterpoint to the previous part with the analysis of the first international conference on forest management in Angola. The introduction of this event serves to show the rooting of a delocalized expert authority in the country, which attempts to establish the legitimacy of its control over the forests through representational relations of distance to them. Overall, I seek (1) to demonstrate how (in Angola, at least) representational ecological knowledge is used to claim rule and occupancy without presence; (2) to show that such rule and occupancy establish their legitimacy by preventing the represented from presenting itself; and (3) to explore what makes exceeding the representable a threat to legitimate ecological knowledge and rule. Ultimately, I discuss the virtues of placing less (exclusive) emphasis on the use of representations in relational ethics and knowledge formation.

Forests as Objects of Knowledge and Care

"Independent" Angola was born and grew up in conflict. After five centuries of Portuguese colonial domination, on November 11, 1975, the new country emerged. Subsequently, a civil war went on for twenty-seven years. Throughout this time, a portion of Angola was referred to, in political and popular discourses, as the "land at the end of the world." The association of Southeast Angola with remoteness originated with early Portuguese explorers, who, the Orientalist narrative goes, noted "the nativeness of the local populations and the almost total preservation of the natural environment."[18]

Yet in the last seven years or so, the image of Southeast Angola has changed, and it is now referred to in national discourses as *terras do progresso* (a "land of progress"). This radical shift is the effect of a public politics of national unification undertaken by the Angolan government.[19] Since 2011 I have conducted intermittent fieldwork in this region—usually twice a year, now totaling approximately eleven months.[20] I frequented governmental, development, and academic departments mostly in the provinces of Kuando Kubango, Bié, and Huambo. For the most part, however, I stayed in rural villages such as Liazemba and Cusseque, which are twenty kilometers apart. These two villages, each having around 350 residents, mostly Tchokwe and fluent in Portuguese, are located in valleys surrounded by a dense miombo forest. My regular back-and-forth journeys between these villages and the cities of the institutionalized environmental

18. Diniz, *Características Mesológicas de Angola*, 455.

19. Baptista, "The Road of Progress."

20. In 2011, I integrated a large research project dedicated to the countries of Angola, Botswana, and Namibia. Crucial for this research program, which was largely conducted by natural scientists and economists, was accountability—the capacity to show and explain the "research findings" and "objects of enquiry" to others physically distant from those same findings and objects. Although I do not approach the intricacies of this project here, this article is an obvious consequence of my epistemological struggles regarding the "accountable science" of the project.

experts introduced me to profound contrasts in the way ecological knowledge was constituted and exercised. One of the most conspicuous contrasts pertained precisely to the knowledge of the forest that encompasses both Liazemba and Cusseque. Consider the following sequence.

In the early morning of May 8, 2013, I meet with the *soba*—village headman—of Liazemba. I have known Soba Laurindo since 2011. Our conversations are long and usually peppered with assorted topics. Without being exuberant, Soba Laurindo has always been an eloquent and unambiguous communicator to me. On the morning in question, I tried to bring the subject of the surrounding forest into our conversation. He seemed reluctant to engage with the topic, remaining silent, hesitant, or, at best, vague during most of our conversation. Finally, after some twenty minutes of nervous silences he said to me, in a conclusive tone, "You have to go [to the forest] and feel it yourself. Then, you will know the forest."

His reaction was not new to me. In my conversations with the villagers, most women, men, elders, and young adults from Liazemba have always been vague regarding the forest. Yet their experience with the forest is essential for making a living. Most of their lives depend on and take shape in the context of the direct relations they establish with the various elements in the forest. However, when asked about it, and in the innumerable informal gatherings and conversations that I participated in, residents of Liazemba seemed to avoid any discussions about the forest, as if it was unknown to them.

Various authors report the same in their ethnographies of forest areas. Eric Waddell described the Enga people of New Guinea's central highlands as "not, strictly speaking, able to say" anything about their lived forests.[21] Referring to research developed by Bradley Walters on mangrove forests in the Philippines, Andrew Vayda, Bradley Walters, and Indah Setyawati point out that most of what local residents do in the forests is nonverbalized.[22] Vayda argues that there is "little active knowledge-sharing" and therefore, residents do not base their doings on "knowledge."[23] Implicitly, these scholars attribute forest knowledge to *something* that must be able to be transferred and transacted by verbal or textual communication. This is not a something of little importance, but the something that João Coelho calls "the very flesh of thought."[24] Basically, they equate forest knowledge with the ability to represent. From this perspective, the silences of Soba Laurindo and his neighbors seem to indicate ignorance about the surrounding forest: as if silence necessarily implies an overall state of lack—in this case a lack of knowledge. Yet this is a perspective that excludes knowledge of an "existence that refuses to be conceptualized"[25] or, as Levinas has noted, a reality that "reveals its existing in

21. Waddell, *The Mound Builders*, 136.
22. Vayda, Walters, and Setyawati, "Doing and Knowing."
23. Vayda, *Explaining Human Actions and Environmental Changes*, 104.
24. Wieser, "'A língua é a própria carne do pensamento,'" 163.
25. Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, 9.

dimensions that cannot be defined by any category of representation."[26] Some scholars actually argue that "to speak of or for nonhuman nature is, to some extent, a misrepresentation."[27] In this view, rather than ignorance about forests, silences can indicate different ways of knowing them, or simply nonparticipation in certain epistemologies. Later in this article we shall return to Soba Laurindo to interpret the unsaid.

I had scheduled for the afternoon of the same day an interview with the director and subdirector of the state Forest Department in Kuando Kubango Province. The meeting was in the city of Menongue, 180 kilometers south of Liazemba. I asked them if they knew of sustainable forest practices undertaken by the residents of Liazemba. After I clarified with them the location of the village, the subdirector's answer came promptly: "The peasant doesn't know anything about forests. In Liazemba and neighboring villages, they are illiterate and thus *don't care* about the forest and other people besides themselves. They don't have how."

The expression "don't have how" (*não tem como*, in the original Portuguese) is common in Angola. It refers to individuals who do not possess the means or do not know how to achieve something needed or aspired to. In the subdirector's opinion, the residents of Liazemba (and neighboring villages) have no know-how about the forest where they live. Moreover, he associated such a lack of know-how with their inability to care about "other people besides themselves." Inductively, the subdirector referred to a chain of positive associations absent in Liazemba: he associated the competence to know forests with literacy, which in turn he associated with the virtue of caring about people in other places. Far from being unconventional, the linking of ways of knowledge with distance in relationships of care pervades politico-ecological discourses in Angola.[28] In April 2011, for example, the director of the Angolan Planet Earth Committee warned that what and how "Angolans know [about forests in Angola] has an impact on other [people in other] countries . . . so Angolans should be aware of their moral responsibility."[29] This public declaration, similar to many other statements made by an elite group of urban governors, state technocrats, and development-science professionals in Angola, comes equipped with a sense of morality associated with the delocalizing of knowledge and governance of local forests. One crucial question emerges: what sort of forest-ecological knowledges are deemed politically, developmentally, and ethically relevant once local forests become declared as relevant to distant individuals and, furthermore, integrated into the field of delocalized care? And, more specifically, which sources of knowledge and modes of knowing are valued in this process?

Later the same day I received a phone call from Luís Infelizmeno, an academic researcher living in the city of Lubango, seven hundred kilometers west of Liazemba.

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26. Levinas, quoted in Geissler, comment on "Anthropology through Levinas," 265.
27. For example, see Sandilands, *The Good-Natured Feminist*, 180.
28. For the effect of knowledge generated at a distance on relationships of care, see Levinas, *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*.
29. ANGOP, "Comité Nacional do Planeta Terra deve servir de exemplo em África."

He was a doctoral candidate in environmental science with whom I had established contact before. I asked him if he knew about the forest at Liazemba. "Yes, perfectly," Luís said, "I read about it. For everybody's sake we have to hurry to solve the ruination of the forest there with proper measures." I asked him about his concerns. He advised me, "Consult the maps and you'll really know it. Check FAO's numbers and the reports of international NGOs, and you'll know what is really happening with the forest there now." At that time, I was staying in Liazemba, near the forest that we discussed. Nevertheless, and despite his being aware of this, he told me that in order to "really know it" I should rely exclusively on information contained in maps and documents produced elsewhere about what was, at that time, physically close to me—a place in which I could dwell.

The next morning I talked with a Spanish development professional working for an international NGO in Kuito, 160 kilometers north of Liazemba. When I mentioned to him the evasiveness Soba Laurindo showed during my conversation with him, the official replied promptly: "The peasants don't have access to the materials and reports [necessary] to know the forests. They know only what they touch and see right in front of their eyes. They don't care and they think everything is fine. But it isn't! The scientific data confirm this. We must work for urgent solutions. This is an ethical matter that touches us all." Then, he alerted me to written works that had been produced by international scientists about forests in Angola. Although he often referred enthusiastically to "traditional knowledge," he downplayed the ability of the individuals to whom he explicitly felt that concept applied to, local rural residents, to produce or possess reliable forest knowledge in their own right.

Underpinning the development professional's rationale was the assumption that the environmental "risks of civilization today typically escape [direct] perception."[30] This view does not necessarily undervalue the commonsense everyday epistemology that "seeing is believing," or the Aristotelian association of sight with evidence. Rather, it underestimates bodily proximity and haptic engagement as methods for knowing properly.

Starting in Liazemba and ending at the international NGO in Kuito, I wish to highlight a conspicuous issue characterizing the ecological-knowledge-based order in Angola: the emergent politics of discrediting and expert demarcation that promote modalities of distant knowing. Crucially, these are modalities that gain an aura of rigor, authority, and ethics from the dignifying of representations and their representers, while underestimating that which is otherwise.

"Intellectualism"

After spending four weeks conducting research in the village of Cusseque, twenty kilometers south of Liazemba, the state governor of the municipality of Chitembo,

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30. Beck, *Risk Society*, 21.

which encompasses both Cusseque and Liazemba, approached me at a food stand in Chitembo's market and told me: "For your studies, you should consult and speak with the intellectuals instead, who of course are not in the village where you stay." Intellectuals, he clarified, are "those who can talk about things properly and know about them." Because of the myriad provincial authorizations and bureaucratic documents I had delivered to his administration in advance he was aware of my research topic and geographical focus. He knew that I was staying in that particular village at the time because I was investigating aspects related to the specific forest surrounding the village. Yet he not only underestimated the contribution of the village residents to my research but also undervalued the condition of my own prolonged presence in the locale as a means of producing reliable knowledge about it. The governor, I learned during the next months, was an advocate of distance in order to learn about there-ness; an advocate of epistemologies of bodily separation.

In his study of media in eastern Germany, Dominic Boyer explores the opposition between the human body and legitimate knowledge.[31] He shows how expertise and "intellectualism" are social phenomena associated with decorporealization. To support his argument, Boyer cites Marxian social theory on the division of labor. In Marx and Engels's words, the "division of labor only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labor appears."[32] In this view, incorporeal mental *Arbeit*—a German word that translates here as "labor"—is associated with reasoning and ethics,[33] while physical *Arbeit* is understood as a less intellectually and ethically reliable activity. This distinction helps to contextualize the words of the governor of Chitembo: trustworthy knowledge about the forest can only originate from intellectual labor, which could imply the absenting of direct bodily interaction with the forest.

More in line with the historiography of the region, such a Cartesian division stems from colonial ideas prevalent in the eighteenth century, which associated bodily sensory experience with the "wild African." In 1793, for example, Friedrich Schiller wrote the famous *Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in which he stresses, "As long as man is still a savage, he enjoys by means of tactile senses."[34] In 1774, in *The History of Jamaica*, Edward Long stated that Africans' "hearing is remarkably quick; their faculties of smell and taste are truly bestial."[35] Much earlier, in the sixteenth century, Portuguese explorers reported that the Jaga people of the Kingdom of Kongo (which encompasses contemporary Angola) were "wild beasts" who oriented themselves in the forests just by listening to the sounds.[36] These positions cultivated the divide between reason and sensuous corporeality, morality and immorality, the clean and the unclean, transcendence

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31. Boyer, "The Corporeality of Expertise."
32. Marx and Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 159.
33. Ibid.
34. Classen, "Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses," 405.
35. Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 383.
36. Lopez and Pigaffetta, *Relação do reino do Congo e das terras circunvizinhas*, 135.

and animality respectively. They cultivated a model for the bestialization of certain modes of knowing, being, and "presencing."

Indeed, the conceptualization of the Other into an object incapable of rationally knowing and dwelling in his or her place of inhabitation was crucial for the colonial venture. It promoted the separation between the subjects who know, who are modern and illuminated, and the objects that do not know, that are savage and thoughtless. This separation, which was always reinforced by religion, science, and law, justified colonial appropriation in rational (and "intellectual") terms. In the colonial project, the usurpation of distant geographies was not only fostered by a way of thinking about race, but fundamentally linked with a way of thinking about what makes knowledge.

Back to present-day Angola. On one occasion, I gave a lift to a state administrator of a regional commune in Chitembo municipality. We went to Mumbué, a town in Bié province. At one point, after I stopped for a brief talk with a group of Cusseque residents, the administrator said, "You should forget these ignorant creatures." I asked him why. "They live surrounded by trees," he explained. I replied, "So, they may not be ignorant in relation to the trees . . . " Before I completed my sentence, he exclaimed, "No, they are ignorant about trees because they live too close to them. They don't know about trees and forests. How could they? They don't have access to anything *about* the trees." Besides reinforcing the burgeoning environmental rhetoric in Angola, which discredits proximity in knowledge formation, he defended the importance of attending to the "about"—the referential—more than its actual referent as crucial for knowing.

Both the governor of Chitembo and the administrator of the commune exhibited a conviction that is pervasive in official discourses related to ecological decision making in Angola: trust mainly in the virtues of distance and representation. Accordingly, in 2006 the Angolan Ministry of Urbanization and Environment published the MINUA 2006, an influential report on the country's environment. The national and international authors advance their crucial instruction at the beginning of the 326-page document: "It is strongly recommended that full priority be given only to . . . choices based on facts and statistics."[37] Like other possible fountainheads of knowledge, "facts and statistics" can be fruitful, of course. They can be effective in strengthening or supporting arguments and campaigns to raise awareness about important matters in vast audiences—that is, to make global questions relevant locally or local questions relevant globally. However, "facts and statistics" are born of something else, and those mentioned in MINUA 2016 originate mainly from methods involving distance.

One of these methods is explained in what has come to be one of the most emblematic contemporary references on forest knowledge in Angola: the scientific article "Spatial Dynamics and Quantification of Deforestation in the Central-Plateau Woodlands of Angola," by Ana Cabral and colleagues. I was first introduced to this work by an

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37. Governo de Angola, *Programa de Investimento Ambiental. Relatório do Estado Geral do Ambiente em Angola—MINUA 2016*, vii.

Italian from an international NGO operating in Lubango. "This text is the leading source for the proper knowledge and administration of forests in Angola," he said. The Portuguese authors of this influential publication state that satellite imagery is the best source of information for knowing and managing the forests in Angola.[38] They base their claim on the analysis of "Landsat satellites images" of the Angolan province of Huambo, which they obtained from US institutions. These images, generated and worked on thousands of kilometers away from what they represent, have a spatial resolution of thirty meters—meaning that one pixel corresponds to nine hundred square meters on the ground. The authors mention briefly the use of "ancillary data" for substantiating their conclusions. These were colonial phytogeographic maps, Google Earth imagery, and reports of several visits to less than 1 percent of the area analyzed. They call the latter "ground truth points"—products of encounters with fragments that nonetheless serve to validate the knowledge of the whole. While this knowing method alone can be useful for dealing with surfaces, it does not apprehend—and, therefore, leaves out—a world of details and circumstances, "ground truths" of 99 percent of the area, to use the authors' terminology, that is *also* important in order to know the forests. Moreover, it disregards the capacity of the known itself in its actual condition, prior to representation, to present itself.

Fundamentally, such confidence in the distant above for knowing and managing derives from placing the referential (the "about")—in particular, the visualized—into the field of total knowing. Christian Metz calls this the "scopic regime" and points out the paradoxical source of its credibility: "the absence of the object" known.[39] Indeed, we are dealing here with a knowledge framework that achieves legitimacy through a paradox: the separation between knowledge and its objects.

The interpretation of geospatial imagery as "evidentiary protocol" has become doctrine in the politico-ecological field in Angola, particularly since the end of the civil war in 2002.[40] This was the time when the country started opening its doors more intentionally to international development-scientific actors. For example, in 2005, the Angolan government invited the United States Forest Service (USFS) to study the forests in Kuando Kubango. The goal was to develop accurate knowledge of the forests in order to produce a management plan.[41] All technical meetings were held in Luanda, around one thousand kilometers from the actual object of knowledge and management. The knowledge-data produced by USFS derived from observation flights over the forests by the international experts.[42] The USFS team came down once to one forest and made brief visits to the villages of Caiundo and Dumbu. These visits, the experts' report divulges, "revealed the ignorance of the local populations in regard to . . . fundamental

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38. Cabral, Vasconcelos, Oom, and Sardinha, "Spatial Dynamics," 1185.
39. Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 6.
40. For "evolutionary protocol," see Engelke, "The Objects of Evidence," 51.
41. Zweede, Safford, and Juergens, "Serviço Florestal do USDA," 7.
42. Ibid., 10.

knowledge of the identity and nature of their surrounding forests."[43] Finally, the USFS team recommended the acquisition of Landsat satellite imagery and the regular use of remote sensing technology by the national experts (in urban areas) to produce the knowledge required for the rational management of the forests in Kuando Kubango.

The point I wish to stress here is that in the modern politics of ecology in and of Angola, that which is made visible from above, and thus rendered representable, is reified and then worshipped. In this process, reliable forest knowledge and forest management are made possible *through*, not just with, representations being produced, handled, and re-presented away from the forests. Such representations are not merely employed in order to credibly reveal the reality of the forests. They have become indispensable to making and acquiring that reality.

Another Art of Learning: Forests beyond Representation

The forest encircling the villages of Liazemba and Cusseque is one of the contemporary targets of "datafication" at a distance by international development-scientific projects. Among other initiatives, at the beginning of 2012, a German PhD student of biology at the University of Hamburg traveled to Cusseque to install various data loggers. He informed me by e-mail that the devices "will stay out there the whole year, to understand climatic conditions, vegetation growth, etc." They were retrieved in 2013 and brought back to Germany. The data loggers carried "data of the forest that is precious for environmental policy-making in the region," as a climate scientist from the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht, who had never visited the forest in question—or even Angola—told me at a conference in Hannover. "What about the knowledge that people who live in Cusseque have about their surrounding forest?" I asked him. "They must know it, of course. But they don't have the precision about the forest that is needed. They lack a detached point of view," he explained. In his view, Cusseque residents' knowledge about their place of living was irrelevant for two reasons: they lack the means of "precision" to know and they know the forest in direct ("attached") relation with it. These arguments are not new. As I mentioned before, they justified and validated colonial occupation in Africa.

In March 2011 I began an uninterrupted stay of two months in exactly that village—Cusseque. When I first contacted the population, I asked the long-term residents to assist me in creating a collaborative map that would display their knowledges and values pertaining to the surrounding forest. Although most of the residents were enthusiastic about it, I faced a methodological impasse. Most of the residents were unable to represent their knowledge and values through cartography or in any other form.[44] Alternatively, people I talked to frequently invited me to accompany them to visit the things in the forest they knew and valued most.

43. Ibid., 14.
44. Baptista, "'Everything,'" 400.

On one of these walks, I was led to the local cemetery—an area absorbed by the forest. I was unfamiliar with the place. I questioned José Buengue about the value of the cemetery for him and why it was more densely populated with trees than the surrounding forest. This was a place of human death filled with nonhuman life. Without obtaining a direct reply, I continued with other questions about the forest. At one point, José stooped, put his right hand on a tree, slowly inhaled through his nostrils, and said to me, "Just listen to this smell." In that tree, there was a hole a few meters above our heads where hundreds of bees produced what residents refer to and value as "wild honey." Surprisingly for me, I was only able to realize this by putting my hand on the tree, as if the inconspicuous vibration of the trunk, which could only be felt by prolonged touch, activated my capacity to hear and recognize the buzzing sound of the bees and the smell of the honey.

This episode echoes something common for local residents: the way knowledge of the forest components are created, updated, and revised comes fundamentally from the known-in-itself and from the overlapping of the senses. Direct touch, hearing, smell, sight, taste—most often simultaneously—are all relevant sources of knowledge, as if to know the forest implies, before anything else, unmediated "multisensing," or, as phenomenologists would call it, a prelinguistic ability in situ. Moreover, the touch-smell of the honey taught me something about the place, which I do not know how to reproduce. I underwent what Anna Tsing realized herself in her ethnography in the Oregon forests: "We don't know how to put much about smell into words,"[45] and even, I would add, into any other form of representation. Basically, José introduced me to the evocative power of the feeling of direct experience—a bone-sensorial signaling experience—to know the forest. A feeling that reaches beyond the representable.

"Feeling," Tim Ingold says, is beyond "making bodily contact." It is a kind of interpenetration of the self and its surroundings. In the context at stake here, it is a way the forest has of "invading" the perceiver and the perceiver's way of "meeting this invasion."[46] Feeling does indeed do something: among other possibilities, it may lead the person to ascribe meaning to the felt, which may remain unspeakable. And this, I defend, should not be treated as something that does not qualify as valuable knowledge. To consider immediate feeling an important means of knowledge implies going beyond the dominant paradigm of "knowing about" and to emphasize "knowing with"—knowing *with* the known.

Accordingly, José brought me into a moment where I learned about the forest *with* the forest. While sensing and learning with the tree, I felt free from the impulse to objectify the essence of the knowledge that I apprehended, which corroborates Ingold's argument: "Where '*of*-ness' makes the other to which one attends into its object . . . '*with*-ness' saves the other from objectification."[47] This means that the knowledge I acquired

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45. Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 46.
46. Ingold, "Earth, Sky, Wind, and Weather," 29.
47. Ingold, "On Human Correspondence," 19–20.

there and then was not cognitive but "ecological."[48] At the heart of this learning practice, characterized by letting things reveal themselves beyond classifications, is the principle that unfeigned ecological knowledge can originate only in what Levinas called the "face-to-face."[49]

For Levinas, meaningful knowledge relies on lived immediacy and the noninterference of representational agency, which in his view withdraws the subjects represented from their beingness.[50] In his words, "The face that looks at me introduces the primary frankness of revelation."[51] In contrast to Heidegger, who advocated for the virtue of distance in moral reasoning,[52] Levinas argued that moral forms of knowledge can only emerge from "the presence of being in the phenomenon."[53] He provides a basis for questioning the ethic of knowing that relies, largely, on objectifying environmental subjects through distanciation.[54] The experience of proximity, Levinas said, offers "the first intelligible," the first rationality. Moreover, for Levinas, proximity is at the core of ethical relations insofar as it can lead to a more honest interpretation of the other (human or, I add, otherwise). Levinas's considerations inform the answer to a vital question: what forms and sources of knowing allow ecological knowables to more effectively become participants in the formation of knowledge about them, and, therefore, are deemed more integrative?

As in many other "collectives" (if not in all, to some degree), in Cusseque, people engage the sensorial and relational capacity of their bodies not only to apprehend, make sense, and learn about the physical phenomena surrounding them but also to value such phenomena. Knowledge, value, and meaning are embedded in the everyday relational field. It is through direct relations with and in the forest that some local residents know and value outside the nameable condition more than forty different tree species, many of which were understood by most of the political and development professionals working in the forest sector who I met in Angola as undistinguished ornamental trees. Knowledge beyond characterization expands the field of the knowable. In Cusseque, this lets each species count as a form of life with some specificity. This is evident when, for example, local residents resort to different tree species for different purposes and occasions. It is by relating directly with things regardless of whether they can be understood through representations that the residents know many other life forms

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48. Ibid., 20.
49. Levinas, *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*.
50. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 98. See also, Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.*
51. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 98.
52. Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 221.
53. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 100.
54. In his humanist philosophy, Levinas excludes the nonhuman. For him, the face of the other, which is the only gateway to understanding this other, is always the face of a human being. However, I extend his arguments beyond human exceptionalism and I apply them to humans' relationships with other organic and inorganic subjects.

and abiotic components in the forest, such as different soils, roots, animals, fruits, insects, rocks, levels of humidity, fungi, and so forth.[55] Ultimately, what these residents make of the surrounding forest is inseparable from both the potency of the forest's actual presence and their prolonged, face-to-face, sensorial engagement with it: the corporally lived confluence with the known.

In Cusseque, various women have died after introducing the peeled roots of the *muchacha* tree into their vaginas. This was explained to me as part of a broader impulse: when some men and women are exasperated with something, someone, or a situation that they feel impotent to deal with, in an uncontrollable moment of fury, they molest themselves with whatever they have at hand. Unexpectedly, some of these self-injuring acts had tragic consequences. The ways that the *muchacha* tree, and, specifically, the acute toxicity of methyl salicylate found in the roots of this tree species, become known in the village sheds light on a further issue: residents' knowledge of the components of the forest, as well as the possibilities and consequences that engaging with them might entail, are intertwined with moments in which the forest's components disclose themselves to the residents. This adds a new dimension to what proponents of nonrepresentational theories and forms of knowing have stressed: as Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison highlight, "They share an approach to meaning and value as 'though-in-action.'"[56] In Cusseque, however, forest knowledge does not just derive from actions and experiences of unrepresentability with the known, but also, and essentially, does so from "the possibility of an *autopresentation* of things"[57]—from letting them be. This openness to the known-in-itself echoes a trait of "shamanic knowledge"—as explained by Viveiros de Castro—since it also takes on the inherent capacities of that which must be known.[58] In this process, both the knower and the known are causal beings for each other. This means that signification is coproduced through immediate relationships. As Levinas would say, these are relationships of knowledge that do not conceptualize.[59]

"You don't learn how to make a cure just by listening or writing it down," a thirty-eight-year-old woman from Cusseque warned me after I asked her about local medicinal practices. "You have to go with me to the forest and get the things yourself. And then, you cook them with your own hands." Her call for personal involvement with the subject in question in order to know it urges incorporation and openness to subjects and occurrences without the imperative of rendering them translatable through words, bodily gestures, or materials. It is a call to immerse oneself in a process of intertwinement between the sensing body and the surrounding world, which eludes any epistemology

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55. To read more on the uses and ways of valuing the forest by the local residents, see Baptista, "Everything."

56. Anderson and Harrison, "The Promise of Non-representational Theories," 6.

57. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 90. Emphasis added.

58. Viveiros de Castro, "Exchanging Perspectives," 468.

59. Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, 48.

that focuses exclusively on models of distancing and representation. What is at stake here is a partly representable knowing.

In Cusseque, the forest is more than merely the stage on which local residents fight for epistemological and material domination; it is a determinant by which both humans and nonhumans are coconstituted—a field of becoming-with. This is why I was often told things like, "The forest taught me to be a man," "It is the forest that helps me to resist life," and "That tree doesn't like me." These are not just metaphorical expressions but the consequences of a relational phenomenon, in which only face-to-face relations in and with the forest can lend the necessary qualities for knowing it. Here, both forest knowledge and self-cultivation emerge from long-standing experiences of closeness, experiences that compel a knowing not only of the forest but of one's self. In this way, rather than as a compound of photographs, nomenclatures, maps, and other representations produced over space and time, the forest has a potency of affect (in knowledge or otherwise) as an assemblage of agentic tutors, companions, and unfriendly entities that are accessible only through experience in the place.

To return to my conversation with Soba Laurindo in Liazemba, his prolonged pauses and hesitation when challenged by my questions about the forest did not indicate ignorance of or, even less, unfamiliarity with it. Rather, they revealed his unwillingness to employ words, concepts, and other communicative representations with which he could express his knowledge about it to me. Words and concepts allow us to grasp realities. But they also imply the specific rules and, more broadly, the governing rationalities relevant to forming and accepting such realities. Implicit in these rationalities is that speaking about, and thus *in the place of*, the known, implies that the known must first be, even if momentarily, converted into a quiet, passive, nonagentic object, which then can be made comprehensible through familiar forms of communication. Basically, Soba Laurindo did not resort to the rules implied in any common form of representational conversion to demonstrate what he knew through lived intercorporeality. This is a knowledge not concerned with the imposition of truth on others—a knowledge that "goes without saying," generated and signified by a partly representable actuality of that which is felt through unmediated relationships and by somatic sensuousness. This is why Soba Laurindo suggested that I engage with the subject of my enquiries in the same way: "You have to go [to the forest] and *feel it yourself*. Then you will know the forest."

Ecoauthority: Knowledge, Management, and Representing Relations

In May 2013 I attended a two-day conference in Huambo, which during colonial times carried the reputation as Angola's academic capital. I was constantly reminded that this was the first international conference on forest management in Angola (Conferência Internacional Protecção e Manejo das Florestas Angolanas, in the original Portuguese). There were six panels; seventeen academic and development professionals from more than eight countries and four continents presented and discussed their findings pertaining to forests and deforestation in the country. No forest inhabitants participated in

the conference. It was an event of group distinction that, with the passage of time, mutated into a "ceremony" performed to crown an elite.

At this "ceremony," the definition of *forest* was one of the key topics. "We should start by discussing what forests are," said one of the conveners of the opening ceremony. Her point was relevant. H. Gyde Lund, a consultant for the United States Department of Agriculture, found over sixteen hundred different definitions for *forest* in institutional, scholarly, and web-based contemporary publications.[60] Since its first use in the late thirteenth century to refer to uncultivated land belonging to the crowns in European kingdoms, especially that used for royal hunts, the term has become diluted and has assumed diverse meanings. At the conference, there were no illusions of creating a radical new definition of *forest*. The challenge was, rather, deciding which of the existing definitions to adopt. Those discussed differed only in terms of numerical limits, and they revolved around tree variables: area covered, tree crown covered, and tree size. According to the latest Clean Development Mechanism, a part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a forest is an area of more than half a hectare with a minimum tree crown cover of 10 percent of the total area. Furthermore, a tree is defined as a plant capable of growing more than two meters tall.[61] At the Huambo meeting, these were the references considered for defining and making sense of the Angolan forests and their levels of deforestation.

This approach, however, is controversial. Nophea Sasaki and Francis Putz, for example, warn that "by setting the lower limit of tree crown cover at 10% or even 30%, degradation leading to substantial reductions in standing stocks of carbon will be allowed to continue without causing deforestation."[62] In other words, the parameters referred to at the conference and officially adopted in many other countries enable areas with few trees to still be formally considered forests. Therefore, by adopting these broad figures, governments and institutions authorize deforestation to occur without recognizing it as such. This is still more paradoxical when the task of stopping environmental degradation is politically, scientifically, and ethically declared by these same governments and institutions as more vital now than ever. Why do international organizations wearing the hat of environmental concern, and national and transnational governments, create and adopt such parameters?

The reply: because such broad parameters allow forestland to be handled from afar. In short, these canopy cover measurements have been established because they can be monitored using *remote* sensing techniques.[63] What happens apart from and undetected under such (pixelated) parameters is not apprehendable from afar. It is unworkable and ungovernable at a distance. Therefore, it is an existence unrecognized. In practice, this

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60. Lund, "Definitions of Forest."
61. UNFCCC, "Report of the Conference of the Parties on Its Seventh Session."
62. Sasaki and Putz, "Critical Need for New Definitions of 'Forest,'" 227.
63. Ibid., 227.

means that the forest becomes captive to a rule of appearances (mostly grasped from above) within which it is ordered and incorporated into the domain of the known and, in turn, made manageable. At the heart of this rendering is the production of certain kinds of ecological existence and the derailing of others—the reliable real becomes that which is attained remotely. Along with this "economy of the Real" come the geopolitical exaltation and legitimation of the type of knowledge (and knowers) that better mobilize and make accessible absent or distant phenomena.[64]

One of the obvious problems arising from forest knowledge being produced mainly through distant analysis is that forests and deforestation gain more relevance as mobilizing representable ideas than as actual, physically felt phenomena. "Representations," Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan stresses, "are intimately connected to . . . policy instruments."[65] They validate and urge interventions. Indeed, what makes representations so sought after is that they not only allow the organization of the known in one's consciousness, but also, because representations can be externalized and circulated beyond oneself, they allow the dissemination of that organization in others. Representational knowledge can, thus, promote the *understanding* of things and peoples while placing these same things and peoples *under the domain* of those who represent them. Levinas called this the "mythic knowledge," a mode of knowing that names and classifies objects in order to appropriate them. This means that acts of representing may be implicated in acts of authority, differentiation, and discrimination. Take the following example.

At the Huambo conference, the seventh presenter introduced the audience to a forest management project that the Portuguese NGO Marquês de Valle Flôr was administrating in a few villages in the municipality of Ekunha, in Angola. At one point, after supporting his arguments with satellite pictures, he referred to the time limit for the NGO project. But then he reassured the group: "We have been in contact with the NGO ADRA and the state-led IDF so that they can assume the management of this forest after we leave." Both institutions are located in the city of Huambo, around one hundred kilometers from the forest villages in Ekunha. At the end, I asked him why the local populations were not considered to manage the forest. "We know how impossible it is for them to manage the forest properly because they simply don't have the knowledge capacity [of the forest] for that," he replied. The main coordinator of the NGO project, who works in Portugal, was in the audience. She made herself known, and offered, "Maybe I can add more information." She proceeded to explain how this project was interlinked with other funded forest projects that the Portuguese NGO was administering in Mozambique: "The data from these projects [in Angola and Mozambique] are compared and categorized in other countries. This is so that the management of the local forests can benefit from the knowledge capacities of international experts." As she

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64. For "Economy of the Real," see Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 277.
65. Sivaramakrishnan, "State Sciences and Development Histories," 69.

explained later, these were "experts" like the climate scientist from the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht who had never visited forests in either Angola and Mozambique. Note that the knowledge capacities and, associated with this, the credibility of the "experts" are not justified in spite of their being separate from their object of knowledge, but because of such a separation. After all, it is because of this separation that the knowledge of the Ekunha forest can circulate to, be "datafied" for, and studied by those living apart from that forest. The NGO coordinator concluded, "This is the most accurate and ethical manner to deal with *our* forests." Here, representations and distance are not just instruments for knowing the forests, but the means of relating with them in such a way as to appropriate them ethically.

This pioneering event was important in cultivating Angolan forests beyond their physical limits, by converting them into critical objects amenable to global comparison. In the wake of the perils and benefits of global interconnectedness, this event certainly served as a promising strategy of inclusion: to include Angolan forests in the map of global awareness. Yet this was also a meeting of elite demarcation, one which reinforced a hierarchy in knowledge formation. It illuminated how making forest knowledge a matter of specific expertise can be associated with the expansion of geoscientific rule. This expansion is mostly carried out by a professional elite who are not physically present in the actual terrains of their expert knowledge—an expansion that detracts from the value of immediate cohabitation between knower and his or her object of knowledge, and therefore undervalues Levinas's face-to-face condition. In this process, distance is transformed into a source of legitimacy and power, and representations become crucial since for something that is absent or distant to be dealt with, it must first be brought into appearance. Ultimately, this means the outsourcing and "denaturalization" of forests. Here, I have in mind the famous Aristotelian conception of nature as having a principle and cause to which it belongs primarily, by itself; that is, as something that does not come to be through means other than its own condition.

Historically, since the rise of postindustrial societies, expert knowledge has become a principal locus of interest for practices of appropriation. It is entangled with mechanisms of power and the confiscation of gainful fields. This explains why, in Angola, the rendering inappropriate of forest dwellers' knowledge and their ways of knowing is a way of deauthorizing them while empowering distant others over the physical terrains of their everyday living.

By summarizing all the presentations and debates that followed them, the meeting in Huambo illuminated the emergence of an elite authority in the country: an authority founded on the transformation of forests into the property of an "intellectualism" devoid of corporeally immediate relationships with its object of knowledge; an authority that does not just rely on distance but that also produces it—distance from the known and also distance to the "others." Arguably, "clumsy" proposals were absent from this convention. As Steve Rayner explains, solutions—and, I would add, proposals—are "clumsy"

when they are based on "multiple, diverse, perhaps incompatible, perspectives . . . resulting in a settlement that is inelegant from any single perspective, but robust because it relies on more than one epistemological and ethical foundation."[66] Indeed, openness to "alternative" possibilities was not a feature of this conference; and so, that which is unnoticeable through representational endeavor remained unnoticed, or rather productively ignored.

Conclusion

In December 2014, after several weeks of staying in Cusseque and Liazemba, I went to Huambo, which, I was told often, has the biggest concentration of forest experts in Angola. I went there to meet with national and international specialists on the forest where I had been staying, three hundred kilometers south of the city. After two days in Huambo, my left eye became inflamed. It was episcleritis, a Cuban doctor told me. "Don't worry," he said, "this is very common here because of the car pollution." My ability to see was severely diminished for weeks. Due to the absence of shade-providing trees in the city, my skin was quickly burned and scarred by the intense sunlight. I became less prone to feeling the world around me through touch. In reaction to the air conditioners in the offices and cars of the forest experts, my nose was frequently congested. Consequently, my capacity for olfactory discernment was weakened. So there I was, in the place of the forest expert elite, an area of pollution naked of trees, depressing my innate senses while improving my capacities for representational relations with the known located elsewhere "out there": a paradox, I felt, that threatened my own health. The preponderance of ecological knowledge by way of distancing and senseless presence in the ecologies known, I thought then, and continue to believe, is not only a question of precision but also a question of an ethic of coexistence too—to know exclusively from afar is to conceive of a world as separate and outside oneself. Ways of knowing may, indeed, carry ethical qualities. As Ingold says, "Something . . . must be wrong . . . if the only way to understand our own creative involvement in the world is by taking ourselves out of it."[67]

The institutionalization of representational knowledge as a primordial method of legitimation creates the opportunity to place ecological authority in the hands of a delocalized expertise, a major attribute of which is to identify the object of its knowledge through a process of disempowering it; that is, in being abstracted from its mundane, immediate relational significance, the knowable loses any possible competence that it might have to partake in the production of the knowledge of itself. Therefore, the ascension of the "expert-representers" in the Angolan forest sector parallels a process by which the very object of their knowledge is disempowered, while representations become the exclusive basis of their legitimacy.

66. Rayner, "Uncomfortable Knowledge," 123.
67. Ingold, "Building, Dwelling, Living," 58.

In contrast, to overcome the sovereignty of representations as a means of knowing forests requires both an increased emphasis on everyday, immediate cohabitation with(in) the forests, and to open the knowledge of the forests to the forests themselves; to knowing the forests through the forests.[68] It implies associating knowledge with the domain of the known, rather than solely with the domain of the knower—knowledge in partly representable understandings is born and develops in the presence of the known itself and, therefore, is meaningful for the relationships happening there. Thus I am calling attention to the potency of location and everyday presence in ecological knowledge. This, however, makes partly representable knowledge incompatible with neocolonial strategies of expansion since it cannot support and legitimize the appropriation of spaces and subjects at a distance or, more specifically, from far above.[69] Indeed, partly representable knowledge is ineffective as a tool of (eco)logics of far-reaching authority and administration. This, I contend, is why such a form of knowledge becomes so markedly a field of discredit and demoralization in Angola's forest ecological sector. Without the representational categories that the scientific-development expertise produces, it would be much more problematic, in ethical terms, to wrest the forests from those who live directly with them.

To conclude, I do not attempt to criticize the virtue of representations in universal science and in knowledge in general. And I do not want to undermine or generalize my arguments to the so-called forestry discipline.[70] Rather, I wish to highlight the kinds of hubris, ethics, and politics of division that the overemphasis on solely representational relationships may support. Characteristic of this division is the separation between representers and the represented, "knowers" and "ignorants," "caring experts" and "careless locals," respectively. This division may revive colonial procedures and is crucial for the contemporary legitimation of power in the ecological field. Concretely, in Angola, the marginalization of forest dwellers through the use of scientific-development knowledge does not occur just because of the difference of representations or the overuse of the body or the senses for knowing, as is commonly mentioned in the literature on "indigenous knowledge."[71] Rather, their exclusion occurs because of the discrediting of the inexpressible and the known in itself. Finally, in Angola the way the scientific-development elite is conquering and arrogating spaces and subjects to itself demonstrates how the glorification of distant forms of representational knowledge affects not only what comes to count as truth, but also what counts as ethical.

68. See Kohn, *How Forests Think*.

69. See Scott, *Seeing like a State* (esp. chap. 1), in which he critically explores the "imperialism of the high-modernist" ordering of forests. "At the limit," Scott notes, "the forest itself would not even have to be seen; it could be 'read' accurately from the tables and maps in the forester's office" (15).

70. See, for example, Mathews, *Instituting Nature*. Note that this is actually the first time that I employ the term *forestry*. Analyzing this scientific field is beyond the scope of this article.

71. Here I include counter-hegemonic fields such as "indigenous technical knowledge," "ethnoscience," "ethnoclassificatory systems," "native categories," and "ethno-forestry."

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